441 It used to be one of the worst roads in Jazirah. At the end of this stretch begins the desert of Deir Ezzor 100 kilometers wide. Some sections of it where rainwater prevents the passage of cars are paved. Nevertheless, the road closes during several weeks in winter.

Another road built crudely by the British Army stretches from Qamishli to Kuber el Bid-Talkoshak-Mosul. It is paved with rough stones and it is only used by cars in winter. Beyond Tel Abu a road branches to Deirik and Ain Diwar.

• [487] Aside from these, all Jazirah roads are tracks. There are no roads between Amuda, Derbassiya and Hassakeh, nor between Ras el Ain and Hasseheh, nor between the more important villages clustering around the several towns.

The absence of bridges across the Jagjag renders communication more difficult especially in winter when the waters of the river rise. There is a bridge at Qamishli, another one at Tal Brak 40 kilometers south and a third one at Hassakeh. In the relatively crowded villages near Qamishli along both sides of the river, crossings are effected with great hardship by loaded trucks especially in winter.

II Roads Between Jazirah and Aleppo

361 Aleppo is the nearest commercial center to Jazirah. It is
438 the market for Jazirah grains, wool, samneh and hides. It provides
491 Jazirah with all its needs of cement, textiles and all kinds of imported goods. That is why daily communication between the two regions is vital to Jazirah, but the Government has not judged it yet necessary to construct an all-weather road. Such a road exists in
491 more or less good shape from Qamishli to Hassakeh and to Point 47. From there on, the road to Rakka is closed all during the winter months and travel to Deir Ezzor is interrupted whenever there is heavy rain. The northern and shorter road Qamishli-Ras el Ain-Rakka-Aleppo is also closed in winter for goods and passengers. The shortest road and that which passes through the best developed areas is the one which follows the railway line Qamishli-Amuda-Dirbassiya-Ras el Ain-Tal Abiad-Jarablus-Aleppo. It is 420 kilometers long as contrasted with 465 kilometers for Qamishli-Ras el Ain-Rakka-Aleppo, and 485 kilometers for Qamishli-Hassakeh-Rakka-Aleppo and 565 for Qamishli-Hassakeh-Deir Ezzor-Aleppo which is the usual route followed in winter.

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

the nomads of the Syrian and Arabian deserts, who have gone to the great towns of the Syrian interior to sell their products and supply their needs. In the economic as in every other sphere of life, the Arab hinterland has given a special colour to Syrian life.

Trade has tended to follow a limited number of routes, which have not varied much in principle from one generation to another. For the trade with Egypt there was the great route which went along the coast of Palestine by way of Gaza. For that with western Arabia, the route ran on the east of the Dead Sea by way of Maan or Petra, in what is now Transjordan ; this was also the path taken by the Pilgrims' caravan which went yearly from Damascus to Mecca. The caravans for central Arabia went down the Wadi Sirhan to the oases of Nejd. In the other direction, routes went north-west from northern Syria through Cilicia into Asia Minor, and north-east through Urfa, Diarbekr and Mosul into Kurdistan, Persia and central Asia. Among the most important routes were those which linked the Mediterranean with India and farther Asia. There were a number of alternative routes. Goods might come by sea to southern Arabia, then by land up the western Arabian route to Damascus or some other centre. They might go up the Persian Gulf, and be landed at or near what is now Basra. From Basra several possibilities lay open : the caravans might make for Aleppo or its equivalent in north Syria, or for Damascus, Homs, or some other town in the centre. If they chose the former route, they could go on the west of the Euphrates and then across the Little Desert ; or else up the Tigris to Baghdad or even Mosul, then across Mesopotamia to the Euphrates and on as before. If their destination was Damascus, at first they would take a similar path to that of the Aleppo caravan, and then skirt the southern edge of the Little Desert and pass through Palmyra to the great towns of central Syria. Once arrived in the towns of the Syrian interior, the goods would be carried down to the coast and shipped to the West : in northern Syria they would go by way of Latakia or the Gulf of Alexandretta ; in central Syria by way of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon or Tyre.

Not all these routes were in full use at the same time. The noon of one was often the twilight of others. Their rise and decline was determined largely by political conditions both in Syria and in the neighbouring countries ; but except in times

of unusual disorder a considerable volume of trade was always carried along one or other of the roads.

This world trade has meant much to Syria. It has brought her wealth. It has given her inhabitants an occupation; until recently much of the trade not only passed through Syria but was handled in its passage by Syrian merchants. This has affected the nature of the Syrian towns, the caravan towns on the routes and the bazaar towns at the end of them. They have been cosmopolitan, the meeting-places of worlds, and their inhabitants have become quick-minded and flexible.

Trade has also affected the political history of Syria. Again and again powerful rulers in the neighbouring regions have stretched their hands over Syria, to tap the wealth of her cities and her routes. Often they have also desired to use her agricultural and forest resources. At other times it has been her strategic position which has tempted them; they have wanted to use her either as a defence-post against rivals or enemies in other neighbouring countries, or else as a bridge across which their armies could pass to attack those countries. The armies, like the caravans, have trodden immemorial paths. They have come sometimes up the Palestinian coast from Egypt; sometimes across the Euphrates from Mesopotamia or beyond; once, and most memorably, from Arabia; but most often from Asia Minor by way of gaps in the mountain barriers between Cilicia and northern Syria. Thus it has come about that for great parts of her history, Syria has been a province of an Empire larger than herself. On the whole, these have been the times of her greatest prosperity. Often she has been not only a part of an Empire or a world, but also its frontier.

Besides the movements of goods and armies, there has been a third movement, that of population. As a consequence of trade or war, or for other reasons, immigrants have flowed into Syria throughout history. There has been a trickle from Egypt and the Mediterranean countries, a larger stream from Anatolia, and occasional inrushes from central Asia; but above all there has been an uninterrupted flow from the Arabian peninsula. Not only individuals but whole tribes have come in. Nomads of Arabia have moved northwards and westwards, either because means of subsistence in the peninsula were insufficient or else under the attraction of plunder; from preying upon the cultivated land of Syria they have gradually

T U R K
HATAY
A L E P P O
E U P H
HAMA
LATAKIA
H O M S
D A M A S C U S
JEBEL DRUZE
TRANSJORDA

END MAP (A)

11: Hourani 8-4 (no date) 1946 MDI Syria MDI LEBANON MDI

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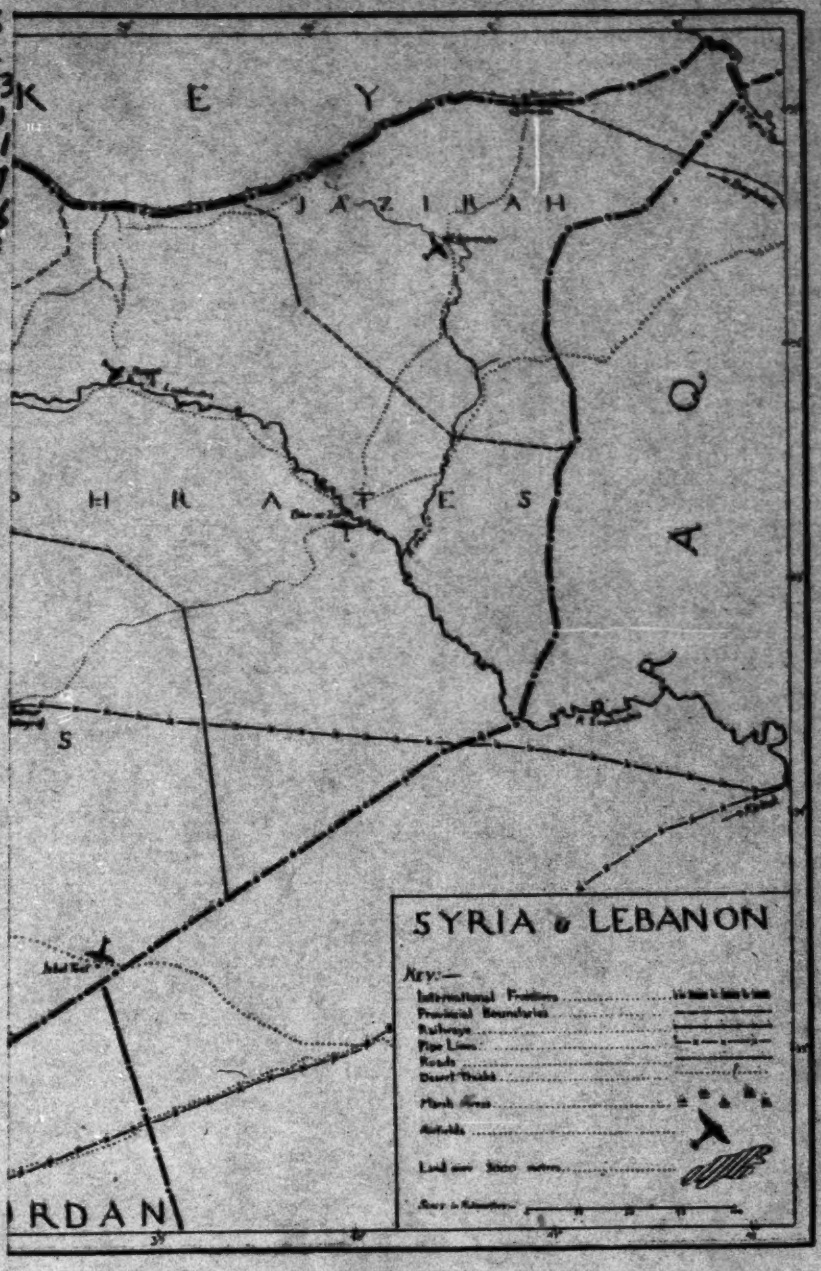

END MAP (B)

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

rail facilities on the principal routes along which commodities had to be moved in growing volume, such as from the Jezireh to Aleppo and Latakia. Unquestionably, also, transport over poor roads has been costly, entailing heavy depreciation and not infrequent interruptions of traffic.

II PRINCIPAL TRANSPORT ROUTES

For an understanding of the transport problems confronting Syria it is also necessary to outline the principal routes over which traffic must move. One of the main transport lines is the north-south axis connecting Damascus with Homs, Hama and Aleppo to the north and with the Hauran, Djebel Druze and Jordan to the south. Crossing this axis in a west-easterly direction are three principal communication lines running from the three ports serving Syria—Beirut and Tripoli in Lebanon and Latakia in north-western Syria. Of these three ports Tripoli is by far the least important, serving only the region immediately around Homs. Beirut is still an important port of entry for Syrian imports, although the volume handled by Latakia has been rising steadily. Through Latakia, however, goes the bulk of Syria's exports.

The west-east communications lines continue in a generally easterly direction after crossing the north-south axis at Aleppo, Homs and Damascus. Those continuing east of Aleppo and serving the Jezireh and the narrow but fertile irrigated lands of the Euphrates are by far the most important. On the other hand, the road or track running east from Homs through the Syrian desert is of little importance except for serving and patrolling the pipelines conveying oil from Iraq to the port of Banias in Syria and to Tripoli. Of somewhat greater significance is the trans-desert route from Damascus to Baghdad. Although for the most part only a track, it provides an all-weather route over which traffic can move between Lebanon and Syria on the one hand and Iraq and even Iran and Kuwait on the other hand. Over this route the well-known Nairo Transport Company carries on an active international passenger traffic with modern buses and a number of trucking concerns haul high cost products such as fruits and vegetables, machinery and rugs. No special urgency attaches to the improvement of the two routes running eastward from Homs and Damascus, however, and no further consideration will be given to them in this report.

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dom. France is the only country in this group with which Syria has regular surpluses.

Syria's trade balance with Lebanon has always been favorable. Syria's chief exports are cereals, live animals and dairy products, vegetables and fruits, wool and cotton; imports consist largely of products of the Tripoli oil refinery, citrus fruits and bananas.

Syrian exports to Iraq are mainly textiles and soap; sheep, wool and dates are imported. The trade balance is strongly in favor of Syria.

Exports to Jordan include, apart from wheat, textiles and other manufactured goods; imports consist largely of vegetables, fruits, wool and hides.

The trade balance with Saudi Arabia is also favorable; exports are similar to those for Jordan, but imports include only two larger items, petroleum and cattle hides.

Trade with Egypt is more balanced and includes, among exports, apricot paste, dried fruits and onions; rice, asphalt, shoes and films are the main imports.

In contrast to trade with its neighboring Arab countries, Syria has a very unfavorable trade balance with Turkey, from which it imports large quantities of live animals, as well as hides, tobacco leaves and timber. Syria's 1951-52 wheat deficit was covered by imports from Turkey.

Syria's trade with countries of the Soviet bloc is comparatively insignificant. In 1953 imports from Czechoslovakia (which, because of the nature of its trade, has been listed with Western industrial countries), China and Romania amounted to about £S 6.7 million at official rates and about £S 9.9 million at free market rates. Few exports went to these countries.

Trade Routes

Table 17 shows the routes along which Syrian foreign trade moves. It indicates that over 50% of export tonnage goes overseas and that 40-50% of imports arrives through Latakia or through Lebanese ports.

In spite of the rapid increase in the absolute tonnage handled by the port of Latakia, which was favored by government regulations limiting the use of other ports, Lebanese ports were able to hold their own in proportion to total Syrian import tonnage. This is explained by the fact that Beirut is the logical port for imports destined for the important Damascus area, while at the same time exports from northern Syria, which have been increasing considerably, have gone mainly through Latakia.

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The large tonnages shown in overland imports from Lebanon are chiefly due to petroleum products from the Tripoli oil refinery.

TABLE 17 Syria's Trade Routes, 1951–53

(*Thousand metric tons*)

	1951	%	1952	%	1953	%
Overseas through						
Latakia						
export	90	43	265	54	353	49
import	163	23	167	21	176	23
Beirut and Tripoli						
export	24	11	30	6	38	5
import	170	23	210	26	205	26
Overland to and from						
Lebanon						
export	64	30	161	33	249	35
import	306	42	332	41	323	42
Jordan						
export	25	12	29	6	69	10
import	14	2	25	3	30	4
Iraq						
export	5	2	5	1	7	1
import	46	6	37	5	25	3
Turkey						
export	4	2	1	—	2	—
import	28	4	34	4	13	2
Total						
exports	212	100	491	100	718	100
imports	727	100	805	100	773	100

SOURCE: Calculated by Syrian government officials.

II TRANSIT TRADE

During various periods in its long history, Syria has played a prominent part both as a transit country and as a country of middlemen in East-West trade. Within the present pattern of world trade and trade routes Syria again has a role to play as a country of transit and perhaps entrepot trade. It has a natural advantage in its location across the shortest route between

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439 487 the Eastern Mediterranean seaboard and on the one hand, Iraq, on the other, Jordan, given the boycott of Israel.

In neither of these trade routes has Syria a monopoly. Iraq, which at present is moving about 100,000 tons of goods through northern Syria by way of the Northern Railway and unspecified quantities of goods through the desert road and Damascus, has the choice of directing these commodities to Turkish, Syrian or Lebanese port terminals. If transport to the Mediterranean ports should prove too expensive or cumbersome, Basra (Iraq) will be used even for the northern provinces of Iraq. Jordan can shift more of its trade to Aqaba and there are indications that this may happen.

In these circumstances, it is clearly in the interests of Syria to make transit through Syria attractive and profitable; it would be ill advised to sacrifice the long-term interest in transit trade to doubtful immediate gains. From that standpoint, it seems rather short-sighted to require that most goods to and from Jordan be moved by rail, irrespective of the wishes and interests of the shippers, and that goods moved from Beirut to Iraq across the desert must first be reloaded into Syrian trucks.[1] It is also inconsistent with the efforts to develop free trade zones in Syria and to encourage the use of Latakia for transit.

III FOREIGN TRADE POLICIES

439 651 652

Licensing

Exports. The government may impose restrictions on the exports of specific goods, including a license requirement. As of the beginning of 1954 exports of some 30 items in the tariff schedule, including various types of metals, glycerine, sulphur, fertilizers, jute cloth and sacks, and lambs, were prohibited, and the country's most important exports, (wheat, barley, flour, cotton and cottonseed, wool, sheep and certain types of cattle) were subject to license. Trade with Israel is prohibited.

These export restrictions were instituted for various reasons—to safeguard domestic supplies and to control the re-export of imported items, particularly those of strategic importance. Other regulations are designed

[1] The total volume of Syria's transit trade is presently estimated at 300,000–400,000 tons annually.

16: Collart et al G-5 (1953) 1954 MD1 Syria MD1

GENERAL

SYRIA AND HER HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

488 175 By geographical position Syria is a corridor and a meeting-place. From east to west and north to south, it is traversed by two natural highways, one winding through the valleys of the Euphrates and Orontes to link the East with the Mediterranean world, and the other carrying the northern peoples southwards to Africa. Through the ages the country has been occupied for short or long periods by Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders and Ottomans. In Syria—at Kadesh and the Yarmuk—some of the great clashes in history have taken place. Today, with her fate in her own hands, Syria's past provides the varied and fertile sources of her culture, and her present, the vigour necessary for the remarkable progress she is now making.

172 Syria's wealth of historical remains is the visible embodiment of her age-long history and, from that point of view, is to be considered as a national heritage. It has a lesson to give the present generation, for such tangible evidence of their country's greatness in the past is a challenge to the young to prove themselves worthy heirs. For that reason alone, these buildings and monuments deserve to be preserved and maintained. Very often, however, they also have an aesthetic or cultural value, being of importance as works of art or bearing witness to the greatest periods of a civilization. As such, they are of importance beyond the national boundaries and their preservation is a matter of concern not only to the country which possesses them, but to all civilized nations.

For Syria, owing to the vast number and diversity of her historical monuments and the particular conditions in which they are situated, their preservation raises complicated problems. The treatment they require varies according to their present state, for only some of them have remained intact and still serve their original purpose, so that their maintenance is a regular, routine matter. Many of them, on the other hand, are used for a different purpose, never contemplated by their builders, for which they have been more or less satisfactorily adapted

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THE SYRIAN DESERT

311 361 The Syrian desert is not uniformly barren. There are enormous stretches of steppeland, where life is not impossible, or at least not permanently so. The winter rains, rare though they are, make the pastures green and fill the water-holes. The wandering Bedouins manage to feed their flocks all the year round; and their camps are found here and there in the desert solitudes. In some places indeed, there is sedentary as well as nomadic life; near a well or a spring a group of dwellings may be built, palm trees grow up and crops are cultivated.

The necessary conditions for the transitory development of certain sites, when circumstances are favourable, may thus be found. At certain times in history, irrigation work has been undertaken to assist crop growing and reservoirs have been dug to make permanent settlement possible. Trade has provided means of livelihood for a larger population than the products of the earth would have sufficed to maintain. Military defence requirements have led to the building of forts and castles, and the necessary supplies for those who manned them have had to be found.

489 361 This accounts for the establishment of the great desert routes, with their chains of halting-places at the only spots where the existence of natural or artificial resources made life possible. The natural route from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, via the Euphrates valley to Aleppo and Antioch, was shortened by the short cut across the desert which of necessity passed through Palmyra, either continuing straight to the Homs Gap or turning south towards Damascus and Palestine. Settlements grew up, at each end of the desert route or at oases along it, or again at strategic points such as river crossings or mountain gorges, some places, indeed, fulfilling several of these conditions (e.g. Dura and Palmyra).

PALMYRA

361 Palmyra has a considerable and well-deserved fame, first for its natural beauty—abundant sulphur springs, transparent blue

p. 24B

variation exists between the living conditions of the more prosperous farmers and of the peasants, many of the latter possessing little beyond the barest necessities.

The larger cities, as Damascus and Aleppo, have been important junctions on trade routes from India to the Mediterranean for centuries, and reflect the influence of both Eastern and Western civilizations. They are a combination of the old Arab-type city and the modern, with most of the amenities of urban life. The older sections are usually made up of several quarters, dominated by different racial or religious groups. The houses are constructed of stone, brick or reinforced concrete and stucco, with flat or tiled roofs. In Damascus, about one third of the inhabitants live within the limits of the ancient city and a third in the modern residential developments.

The Bedouin follow essentially the same pattern of life in Syria as in other countries of the Near and Middle East. The nomadic tribes dwell in tents made of goats' hair, usually in close association with their livestock. Their standards of living are primitive, both in the tent encampments and the semipastoral settlements.

ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION

Water Supplies

Water supplies are deficient in many sections of the country, and acute shortages may be experienced during the dry season. In the rural areas, domestic supplies are obtained from deep or shallow wells, springs or rivers, and sometimes from rain-water cisterns. *Korazes*, or wells connected by underground conduits which often extend for several miles, and waterholes, dug in the plains or near watercourses, are used in some districts. The village supplies are frequently polluted and responsible for the spread of intestinal infections.

The water supply of Damascus is taken from an underground reservoir at 'Ain el Fije, which is fed by springs in the Anti-